5th January 1954]

Price of paddy in Malabar.

* 304 *Q.*—SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(*a*) the price of paddy prevailing in free market in July 1953 in the Coimbatore zone and Malabar zone; and

(*b*) whether the Government have received any representation from any quarter to abolish the zonal system, and if so, what has been done?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (*a*) The open market price of paddy in the Coimbatore zone was ranging between Rs. 17·34 to Rs. 20·38 per maund for first sort and between Rs. 16·56 to Rs. 17·96 per maund for second sort. The open market price of paddy in the Malabar zone was ranging between Rs. 21·87 to Rs. 21·97 per maund for first sort and between Rs. 21·12 to Rs. 21·23 per maund for second sort.

" (*b*) Yes. The Government have however decided to maintain the zonal divisions which serve to segragate the highly deficit districts and ensure that there is rational distribution of existing surpluses in each zone."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" In view of the fact that subsequently the disparity between the price in the two zones has been increasing still further, may I request the Government to give a second thought to their decision not to disturb the zonal system? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I have dealt with this matter at sufficient length during the budget debate. Anyhow, we will be on the watch and we will take sufficient action to put down the price."

SRI KUNHI MOHAMED SHAFEE :—" Will the Government enquire into the causes for the difference in the price of rice in these two districts and do the needful to bring down the price of rice in the Malabar district? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" According to the figures I have, there is not much of a difference between the price of first sort rice in the Coimbatore and Malabar zones. There is a difference in the price of second sort rice in the two zones. But I find that Malabar people do not make any distinction between first and second sorts. They pay almost the same price. That seems to be the difficulty."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" There are two important factors of which the Hon. Minister may certainly be aware. One is that as against the price prevailing in Coorg, the tiny place Mahe and Coimbatore—all these three are places surrounding Malabar—the price of paddy and rice in Malabar is much higher. The second is that the rice sold in ration shops in Malabar is a free mixture of rice, insects and other foreign particles. Therefore will

the Government see that either clean and cheap rice is sold in the ration shops or the free market price is depressed by a realignment of the zonal system? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" If there is any defect in the quality of the rice, certainly I will look into it. I am interested in supplying clean and wholesome rice as far as possible. As regards the realignment of zones, the matter requires consideration. We have already considered the matter and taken a decision. If circumstances compel us to take a different decision, we will certainly take that into consideration."

SRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN :—" With regard to clause (*b*), I want to ask a question. The Government have abolished the zonal system except with reference to Malabar and South Kanara. The order giving effect to this arrangement has not been communicated to all departments, especially the Railways who are still insisting on the fulfilment of conditions that were prevailing before the new arrangement came into force. Are the Government aware of this fact? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" We are issuing the order to all departments concerned. Perhaps it takes some time to reach them. I am sure that within a short time everything will be normal."

SRI S. RAMALINGAM :—" மலபாரில் இருக்கக்கூடிய அங்கத்தினர்களுக்கு இது ஒரு முக்கியமான பிரச்னையாக இருப்பதால் இதற்கு அரை மணி நேரம் கொடுத்து விவாதத்திற்கு எடுத்துக்கொள்ளவேண்டும் என்று கேட்டுக்கொள்ளுகிறேன். "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, we had a full discussion during the budget debate."

MR. SPEAKER :—" To-day we are rising at 1-30 p.m. It is not possible to allow a half-hour debate. I am not going to allow it."

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR :—" There are two important factors which the Hon. Speaker may be pleased to bear in mind. The rice that is supplied in Malabar is very, very bad and unwholesome. Particularly in view of the epidemic that is spreading everywhere, this is very, very important. Secondly, the bitterness of the people of Malabar is so much because rice is sold cheaper in Mahe, Coorg and the neighbouring district of Coimbatore. The Government can at least see that rice from Coorg is got for sale in Malabar. All these considerations go to show that a half-hour debate is necessary, although the matter might have been covered in a general way during the budget discussion."

MR. SPEAKER :—" I will look into the matter and see whether a half-hour debate can be given to-morrow or day after to-morrow."